

**Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC)**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Mary Streeter, Chair, at the Town Hall.

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Mary Streeter, Chair; Paris Boice, Vice-Chair (who had to leave at 8 pm); Ellen Kosmer, Peter Jessop Jim Oldham, Laura Lovett, Marilyn Blaustein, Jim Brissette. Absent: Sandra Anderson.

**Staff in Attendance:** David Ziomek, Nate Malloy

**Others:** Rob Crowner, Janet Keller, Megan McDonough, Walt Kohler, Bruce Coldham, Andrea Battle, Greg Stutsman, Nancy Gregg, Bonnie MacCracken, Kenneth Rosenthal, Karen Bell, Bob Romer, Larry Kelley, Joan Burgess, Joanne Sunshower, Jacqui Wallace, Roger Wallace, Cyrus Cox, Ophelia Sowers, John Higgenson, Deborah Herbert, Stephen Woolf

**Presentations and Discussion**

- **7:05 Amherst Community Land Trust (ACLT): North Amherst lot on North Pleasant Street:** \$115,000, presented by Rob Crowner and Janet Keller.  
Jim Oldham recused himself from this presentation; Peter Jessop considered it appropriate for himself to stay. Mr. Crowner outlined ACLT's goals to promote social and economic benefits to community by providing low-income housing through the model of the trust owning the land and the person the home via a restriction on the sale so the house remains affordable in perpetuity. ACLT members and supporters have been meeting for two years and this is the first project in conjunction with North Amherst Community Farm (NACF) and Habitat for Humanity (HH). The project is to buy a ¾ acre lot and build two new units of affordable housing. They are hoping for additional funding from Interfaith, Inc, of \$20,000, which if received will reduce the request to CPAC to approximately \$95,000. Ms. Keller talked about the advantages of this project to the community, particularly because of its location along a sidewalk, bus route and it will help to preserve a sustainable farm (NACF) that's central to the life of the community. Megan McDonough of HH spoke in favor of this project and explained the role of HH and the ACLT model in general. Mr. Ziomek noted that the appraisal for this land was supported through CPA funds in 2011. Mr. Jessop asked about a letter of intent from HH to build the units (letter expected in the spring). Mr. Jessop stressed the importance of this letter of intent for the vote at Town Meeting. He Jessop asked if the appraisal done in 2011 was "too old." Mr. Ziomek explained it was OK since the Town would not own the parcel. Ms. Streeter asked what happens if the homeowner's income rises. ACLT responded: That would be OK -- key is that the sale price is restricted always to the 30-60% of income level. House can even be passed onto a child. But land remains owned by ACLT. ACLT expects its fundraising efforts to be ongoing.
- **7:35 Amherst Municipal Housing Trust Fund (MHT):** \$50,000 for due diligence, surveys, appraisals and similar needs to move projects forward. Presented by Greg

Stutsman and Nancy Gregg, of the Housing and Sheltering Committee. The MHT concept is new to Amherst, but not the state. Money would only be used for affordable housing. Mr. Malloy explained some details of grants and funding about how the MHT works and is aligned with CPA goals. Mr. Ziomek made it clear that the town staff would oversee the use of this money. Mr. Jessup and Mr. Oldham asked why the need for this? Mr. Ziomek explained that this provides the town with another tool to provide affordable housing; provides greater flexibility; provides mechanism for opportunities that come up and require efforts that are not possible via existing town committees and structures. Mr. Malloy explained how the committee members of the trust will work and be monitored by town staff (of finances). The MHT is also doing its own fundraising. Because the committee has not yet been formed no long-term or strategic plans have been discussed or created; this CPA money will enable that committee to start work on projects. Possible the MHT could also work in conjunction/as partners with ACLT.

- 7:55 Historical Commission, Goodwin Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church (GMC):** \$25,000 for archeological survey et al, presented by Joanne Sunshower of GMC with many members of the church also in attendance.

Ms. Sunshower explained some background of the project and its complexity, along with the significant history of the church to the community particularly as a center of community and cultural and religious life for many African Americans in the area since 1910. The church is on the National and State Historical Registers. Key issues that the church needs these funds to address in order to preserve the structure and its function as an ongoing center of culture and religious life include drainage issues and accessibility, which require archaeological survey work to be done before any such work takes place. Mr. Jessop reminded everyone of the need for a historic preservation restriction in exchange for CPA funds. Ms. McCracken noted that Amherst College has traditionally granted an easement and this ensures that the public will have access to the church. Although the church does ongoing fundraising, it has not raised enough money to help significantly with the costs of this project. Ms. Lovett noted the historical value of the church to the town. The CPA committee as a whole noted that this proposal was very well-documented.
- 8:26 Jewish Community of Amherst (JCA): Steeple work:** \$175,000, presented by Karen Bell, Bob Romer, and Stephen Woolf of JCA.

Ms. Bell noted that the JCA buildings are on the National Historic Register (sanctuary and parish house). The steeple and belfry had structural work done in the 1980s. JCA has spent money to help protect/preserve the buildings, but is looking to CPA for funds because the costs now outstrip JCA's ability to fund them. The steeple was hit by lightning recently and a claim is still being worked out with the insurer; the steeple tilts at a 3% angle. Mr. Woolf explained that the request is not necessarily to ensure the steeple's structural integrity, that needs more study, but that's part of it; the primary purpose is to straighten it for visual appeal, as it's part of a town historic district and the first building of historical significance entering the town from the east along Main Street. Ms. Lovett wondered if the tilt was part of the historic landscape. Mr. Woolf thought not because of previous work done on it, including in 1927; the tilt happened between 1927 and the 1980s. If money comes in from insurer, JCA will

reduce its CPA request accordingly. Question raised about historical preservation restriction because it typically applies to the entire façade of a building; this to be explored further by JCA, town staff, and historical commission (HC). Other issues raised by CPA members: need for HC to vote on proposal; need for explanation for town meeting about need for this and in essence what the town gets for this investment of CPA funds; would fixing the tilt create other problems. JCA, town staff, and HC to do further work on this and other related issues.

- **9:12 Amherst Historical Society (AHS) Painting Strong House:** \$25,000, presented by Jim Wald of the AHS.  
Mr. Wald gave some background on the importance of the Strong House and how its need for a proper paint job is critical to preserve the structure; it is not for appearance or basic maintenance as it's beyond those now and it's all about preservation. Mr. Wald not sure about the colors used in past. Committee hoped a historically appropriate color would be used.
- **9:12 Amherst Historical Society Archaeological Survey:** \$25,000, presented by Jim Wald of the AHS. Mr. Wald explained the importance and need for the survey and how the Strong House was working in cooperation with the Jones Library. The survey work and results will be open to public with public participation such as students likely. This survey is key to finding out how land was used and for future work on the site.

Presentations concluded at 9:45.

**Further discussions:** None.

**Approve any minutes:** None.

**Adjournment: 9:47**

Moved by Mr. Jessop; seconded by Ms. Kosmer: unanimous.

#### **Documents Distributed**

- Agenda, 1 page
- CPAC Proposal Request 2016 - Jewish Community of Amherst, Addendum, January 20, 2015, 9 pages
- Letter from Gregory D.S. Bascomb in support of funding for the Goodwin Memorial Church proposal," January 20, 2015, 2 pages
- Questions from CPA Committee to Applicants for CPA funding, 3 pages
- Housing and Sheltering Committee, FY2016 CPA proposal-Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund, 6 pages
- Goodwin Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church brochure," 6 panels
- Amherst Community Land Trust brochure," 6 panels
- Draft Meeting Minutes, 12/16/14, 4 pages

Respectfully submitted by Jim Brissette, acting clerk

Approved March 31, 2015